

- Don't allow pine needles and leaves to accumulate to more than 2 inches thick within the defensible space of the structure.

Replacement

It is better to replace more flammable plants with vegetation that is less apt to catch fire. For example, you might replace a dense stand of flammable shrubs with an irrigated, well-maintained flower bed. See Table 4 for a list of some suggested substitute plants.

Where to get help

Managing a forest to reduce the risk of wildfire can be an overwhelming task for an inexperienced landowner. It's important to seek assistance from the NC Division of Forest Resources (www.dfr.state.nc.us/), your

local Cooperative Extension Center (www.ces.ncsu.edu), or a consulting forester (www.dfr.state.nc.us/Managing_Your_Forest/consulting_foresters.htm). Another good resource is the Firewise Website: <http://www.firewise.org>

Table 2. Herbaceous plants encouraged by seasonal diskings.

Plant	Season			
	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Blackberry		X		X
Partridge pea			X	
Beggarweed	X	X		
Pokeweed		X		
Ragweed	X			X

Table 3. Types of dead vegetation and recommended practice.

Dead fuel type	Recommended practice
Standing dead trees	Remove all standing dead trees from within the defensible space.
Downed dead trees	Remove downed dead trees within the defensible space if they have recently fallen and are not yet embedded into the ground. But leave in place downed trees that are embedded in the soil and cannot be removed without soil disturbance. Remove all exposed branches from an embedded downed dead tree.
Dead shrubs	Remove all dead shrubs from within the defensible space area.
Dried grasses and wildflowers.	Once grasses and wildflowers have dried out or "cured," cut and remove them from the defensible space area.
Dead needles, leaves, branches, and cones (on the ground)	Reduce thick layers of pine needles to a depth of two inches, but do not remove all needles. Take care not to disturb the "duff" layer (dark area at the ground surface where needles are decomposing) if present. Remove dead leaves, twigs, cones, and branches.
Dead needles, leaves, branches, and twigs (other than on the ground)	Remove all dead leaves, branches, twigs, and needles still attached to living trees and shrubs to a height of 15 feet above ground. Remove all debris that accumulates on the roof and in rain gutters at least once a year.
Firewood and other combustible debris.	Store firewood and other combustible debris (wood scraps, glass clippings, leaf piles, etc.) at least 30 feet uphill from the house.